

OKINAWA MARINE

JANUARY 31, 2014

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Allies respond to potential crises at Keen Edge 14

2nd Lt. John Roberts
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP FOSTER — Japan Self-Defense Forces and U.S. military forces participated in Exercise Keen Edge 2014,

a joint-combined command post exercise, in an effort to better prepare and respond to potential emergency and crisis situations. Keen Edge 2014 is a weeklong, 24-hour-a-day exercise that used a

computer-based system to simulate a potential real-life crisis and test the real-time response capabilities of all personnel and units involved. More than 500 U.S. participants from the Army,

Navy, Air Force and Marines worked together Jan. 27-31 to ensure mission success in several crisis areas to include force protection, ballistic missile defense, host nation support and noncombatant

evacuation operations.

“Being able to simulate real-time events is a great way to test our response capabilities, especially in terms of speed and effectiveness,” said U.S. see **KEEN EDGE** pg 5



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Marines puts steel on targets at ARTP 13-4

Marines fire an M777A2 155 mm lightweight howitzer Jan. 22 during Artillery Relocation Training Program 13-4 at the North Fuji Maneuver Area. During their three days of live-fire training, the Marines honed their artillery expertise. The Marines are with 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, currently assigned to 3rd Bn., 12th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, under the unit deployment program.

Photo by Sgt. Brian A. Marion

Japan's top enlisted attend SNCO Academy leadership course

Cpl. Lena Wakayama
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP HANSEN — Warrant Officer Yoshiaki Suzuki, the sergeant major of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, and eight other top enlisted soldiers, including command sergeants major from units throughout the JGSDF participated in the Japan Observer Exchange Program Jan. 21-24 at the Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy on Camp Hansen.

“The senior enlisted of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force have an interest in how we develop, shape and mold our enlisted Marines into enlisted leaders,” said Sgt. Maj. Anthony Cruz Jr., the director of SNCOA, Okinawa. “We put together a leadership package to instruct and train them (how the Corps teaches its enlisted Marines).”

This is part of a larger effort to strengthen cooperation between SNCOA Okinawa and the JGSDF in order to enhance the combined efforts between the U.S. and Japan.

This is the first time the SNCOA has presented a syllabus like see **JOEP** pg 5



Cpl. Levi J. Owens operates his diver propulsion device Jan. 22, during a certification course at Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. The DPD is a battery-powered vehicle capable of carrying two divers and their gear while submersed out of sight. The course was a part of Exercise Sandfisher. Owens is a reconnaissance man with Company B, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force. Photo by Cpl. Brandon Suhr

Recon Marines earn DPD certification

Cpl. Brandon Suhr
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

MARINE CORPS BASE KANEOHE BAY, Hawaii — Marines with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion are taking part in a certification course Jan. 13 – Feb. 3 at Marine

Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii, to allow them to operate diver propulsion devices as part of Exercise Sandfisher 2014. Sandfisher is an annual, bilateral amphibious reconnaissance and combat diving exercise between an international partner nation, see **BREATHE** pg 5

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Black History Month

Celebrating, understanding African American cultural history

Gunnery Sgt. Darrell W. Clark

Why do we celebrate Black History Month? I get asked this question about similar monthly observances, but even more so for Black History Month. Most people that pose this question to me do not believe we should celebrate this month because slavery is over and everyone is free and equal.

The reason we have Black History Month is to educate those who may not be familiar with the past or present African American traditions and contributions to American society.

Many school systems within the United States skim over or do not teach African American history at all. By the time the average recruit reaches basic training, he or she may have little to no knowledge about the history of African Americans in this country. The recruit is then left to formulate opinions based on stereotypes played out in the media.

The Marine Corps has long since recognized that different lifestyles do not hinder the organization's team-first mentality. Adding these attributes, along with the personal journeys associated with them, solidifies organizational effectiveness by embracing the diversity that exists within our ranks.

Working in one of the world's most diverse organizations does not come without challenges. As an African American, I have dealt with numerous challenges unique to my ethnic origin. What I have seen is that

education on another individual's heritage and working toward a common goal eliminates barriers and strengthens bonds. Barriers that existed heavily where I grew up in the South no longer impede my progress because leadership within the Department of Defense embraces what makes me different.

While I certainly do not believe the struggle of African Americans today is anywhere close to the trials and tribulations that my ancestors had to deal with, monthly observances like this will continue to bring more people into the fold and bridge the diversity gap that our nation has continuously struggled with.

I challenge all service members this month to try to learn something new about African American history that they may not have known before. A good place to start is recognizing that the theme of this year's Black History Month is the 50th anniversary of the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

Through various educational programs throughout the ranks, more and more service members understand why we celebrate Black History Month. The challenge moving forward will be continuing to seek out those who do not understand why we celebrate the history of African Americans or those who believe we should not have a month like this at all. History does not change; however, as the saying goes, "those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it."

Clark is the equal opportunity advisor for Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

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Navy Lt. Cmdr. Raynard Allen places a poppy on the casket of retired Capt. and Medal of Honor recipient John James McGinty III during his funeral Jan. 23 at Beaufort National Cemetery, Beaufort, S.C. McGinty, a decorated Vietnam War hero, died Jan. 17 in his home in Beaufort at the age of 73. Allen is the chaplain for Headquarters and Service Battalion, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island. Photo by Cpl. Caitlin Brink

Marines cross a berm during Copeland's assault Jan. 15 at Edson Range, Camp Pendleton, Calif. The first time the Marines participated in the course it was an individual effort. During the Crucible, the exercise became a team effort. The Marines are with Company C, 1st Recruit Training Battalion, Recruit Training Regiment, Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Tyler Viglione



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Best Tabloid Format Newspaper



Gunnery Sgt. Matthew C. Luckey provides cover while Republic of Korea Marines radio for assistance prior to a raid in an area where simulated enemy activity was spotted Jan. 22 during Korean Marine Exchange Program 14-3 at the Mountain Warfare Training Camp in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea. As part of KMEP, the Marines cross-trained in a multitude of cold-weather skills and missions such as skiing, assaults, patrols and raids. The raid is part of the training evolutions leading up to a 400-kilometer hike. Luckey is a platoon sergeant with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force. The ROK Marines are with the 1st ROK Special Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st ROK Division. Photo by Lance Cpl. Matt Myers

Recon Marines prepare for extreme hike in South Korea

Lance Cpl. Matt Myers

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

MOUNTAIN WARFARE TRAINING CAMP, Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea — Marines and sailors with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion deployed to the Republic of Korea Mountain Warfare Training Camp located in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea, prepared to participate in a 400-kilometer hike as part of the Korean Marine Exchange Program 14-3, Jan. 22.

KMEP is an annual training event that allows Marines from both nations an opportunity to project their military power, cross-train in skills such as cold-weather survival and tactics, and deepen cultural ties.

The U.S. Marines participating are with the 3rd Recon Bn., 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force. The ROK Marines are with the 1st ROK Special Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st ROK Division.

The U.S. Marines will train for a multitude of missions during KMEP that could occur in an extreme cold-weather environment, including various assaults, raids, long-range patrols, climatization events, skiing and a 400-kilometer hike, according to Capt. Chad R. Bainbridge, a platoon commander with 3rd Recon Bn.

"This is the first time that the Marine Corps has gone on this hike with the ROK Marines," said Bainbridge. "Other units have been invited to the cold-weather hike, but none have actually participated."

The hike will span 13 days and cover a massive 400 kilometers across South Korea, according to Bainbridge.

"Most of the hike will be on roads following a river, but at some points the teams will (separate into different groups) and (complete) infiltrations training then regroup," said Bainbridge.

"Of course, some of it will be cross-country terrain movement."

During the hike, the Marines will travel with lighter packs, averaging around 40 pounds and carrying only the essentials, such as food, water, sleeping gear, warming layers and rifles, according to Gunnery Sgt. Matthew C. Luckey, a platoon sergeant with 3rd Recon Bn.

"Doing this hike with the ROK Marines, builds camaraderie, respect and gives our commander confidence that we can do what we say we can do," said Luckey. "It also sends a message to our enemies that you can take away all our vehicles and helicopters and other modes of transportation, and in the end we will still find a way to go where we need to go."

To prepare for the hike, the Marines conducted three ruck runs and the annual Recon Physical Assessment Test, which consists of a 500-meter swim, maximum set push-ups and sit-ups, and a grueling 12-mile speed hike, according to Petty Officer 3rd Class Cody Goddard, a corpsman with the battalion.

"Besides the unit training, a lot of the guys were in the gym working on their lower body strength," said Goddard. "We did a lot of sprinting and squats."

Although there are some obstacles and the task is daunting, the Marines of both nations will train well together and make it to the finish line, according to Luckey.

"It's difficult because of the language barrier, but it's interesting to see how (the ROK Marines) operate and how they approach things," said Luckey. "Being invited out here is significant because it gives us the opportunity to work together, do this cold-weather training together (and be successful together)."

BRIEFS

CAMP FOSTER TAX CENTER OPENS

The Camp Foster Tax Center will open Feb. 4 at 8 a.m. in Bldg. 5960 (same as the Military Clothing Store).

For more information and updates, contact <http://www.mcbbutler.marines.ml/BaseInformation/LegalAssistance/TAXCENTER.aspx>.

MARINE MILITARY POST OFFICE SUPER BOWL HOURS

Due to the observance of the Super Bowl, the finance window will be closed Feb. 3. Parcel pick-up service will operate as normal.

Normal service hours for the post office will resume the following day.

For more information, call the Marine Corps Installations Pacific Assistant Postal Officer at 637-5011.

RESERVE OPPORTUNITIES

The Marine Corps direct affiliation program, MARADMIN 419/13, affords highly qualified active component Marines, enlisted and officer, the opportunity to affiliate with a Selective Marine Corps Reserves (SMCR) unit following their end of active service.

The program provides Marines with a no-cost six-month extension of their existing health care benefits.

Eligible Marines may also apply for any relevant incentives, to include: affiliation bonus, composite score bonus points or the retraining program in conjunction with the request.

Marines requesting the 12-month early release per MARADMIN 366/13 for officers and MARADMIN 330/13 and 662/13 for enlisted are eligible to participate in the direct affiliation program.

For more details, call Staff Sgt. Brian Joseph 622-6004 or email brian.joseph@usmc.mil.

CONSTRUCTION ON EXPRESSWAY

Maintenance work is ongoing between Okinawa Expressway Yaka (Exit 7) and Kin (Exit 8) interchanges through March 31.

A section of the highway will have reduced lanes and no center divider. Traffic congestion is expected during peak commuting hours and major events.

TO SUBMIT A BRIEF, send an email to okinawamarine.mccb.fct@usmc.mil. The deadline for submitting a brief is noon Wednesday. Okinawa Marine reserves the right to edit all submitted material.

Marines bridge communications, combat during JCC

Lance Cpl. Pete Sanders

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

JUNGLE WARFARE TRAINING CENTER, Okinawa, Japan – Marines stationed on Okinawa participated in a Jungle Communications Course Jan. 23-27 at the Jungle Warfare Training Center, Camp Gonsalves, Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Marine Corps Installations Pacific.

The four-day course included classroom instruction, radio programming and land navigation. The participants were from units ranging from infantry to field radio communicators.

“These Marines experienced exhaustion (during this training),” said Staff Sgt. David L. Cole, chief instructor with the training center. “They were going to be tired, they were wet, they were muddy, and they still had to program radios, effectively set up antennas, and set up communications with the operations center.”

Organizers designed the course to give participating infantrymen experience with communications equipment, as well as provide communications Marines simulated combat experience while operating in a jungle environment, according to Cole.

“This course is designed to bridge the gap between communications and combat,” said Cole. “The course was not designed for any specific exercise or operation.”

“Rather this course was designed to prepare the Marines for missions in our particular area of operation, which has quite a bit of jungle.”

Participants achieved the overall mission of the course by becoming more proficient at their jobs and as Marines, according to Lance Cpl. Alec J. Wiedenbeck, a radio operator with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, currently



Marines verify their checkpoints Jan. 24 at the Jungle Warfare Training Center, Camp Gonsalves, during a land navigation portion of a Jungle Communications Course. The course, which began Jan. 23, covers operation of communications equipment in jungle environments, as well as basic combat techniques. The Marines are with various units within III Marine Expeditionary Force. Photo by Lance Cpl. Pete Sanders

assigned to 4th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, under the unit deployment program.

“I definitely feel like I’m getting better at my job,” said Wiedenbeck. “It’s a pretty good mix of things I’m familiar with and things I’m not.”

The importance of becoming proficient in a jungle environment was not lost on anybody, according to Petty Officer 3rd Class Nathan E. Robbins, a corpsman with the training center. It allowed participants to see how well they were able to handle being in such a harsh environment.

“It’s beneficial for all the communications

units to be able to work in this type of environment,” said Robbins. “The more proficient they are, the more muscle memory they have, the more they can (focus) and just do what they know they can.”

Following the course, these Marines will return to their parent commands to share their recently gained knowledge and experience, according to Wiedenbeck.

“The course is basically teaching me how to survive,” said Wiedenbeck. “Everything is harder to do in thick jungle; from setting up communications to maintaining it (but this course has prepared me for it).”

Marines, sailors take in history during Shuri Castle trip

Lance Cpl. Diamond N. Peden

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

CAMP KINSER — With its red columns and intricate golden embellishments, Shuri Castle was first established in the 1400s and has since been destroyed and rebuilt multiple times.

As an integral part of Okinawa’s rich history, Shuri Castle has become a popular stop for all visitors to the island.

Marines and sailors with Combat Logistics Regiment 37 traveled to Shurijo Castle Park Jan. 24 in Naha City to see how this historical monument played a part in World War II.

During the war, the Imperial Japanese Army placed its underground headquarters underneath Shuri Castle for many reasons. One being that it offered a strategic position upon a hill that overlooked the different ridges.

“I think that the Japanese general was very smart that he chose that location to try to hold off the U.S. military forces for as long as possible,” said Lance Cpl. Damon A. McCoury, a heavy-equipment operator with CLR-37, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force. “It was pretty well fortified and not very easy to take. I couldn’t imagine what it would be like for the Marines charging up those hills. I understand why it was some of the hardest fighting of the war.”

For the Marines and sailors who visited Shuri Castle, it was evident how much different it was to explore the actual site of where the battle took place rather than reading it from the textbook.

“It’s not often that we can one day read about history in books and the next day see the location where that history was made and see for ourselves the heritage that our military and our nation has gone through,” said Navy Lt. Kevan Q. Lim, the chaplain of CLR-37. “It helps me to have an appreciation of those who went before, and helps us to understand a little better about why we’re here and why we do things the way we do.”



Navy Lt. Kevan Q. Lim walks down the stone stairway to the outer courtyard of Shuri Castle Jan. 24 in Naha City. Marines and sailors with Combat Logistic Regiment 37, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force, visited Shuri Castle as part of a historical education event. Lim is the chaplain of CLR-37.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Diamond N. Peden

Before World War II, Shuri Castle was considered a treasure in Okinawa. Now 70 years later, Marines and sailors see how much it still means to the people.

“It made me hopeful because we can go to a tourist area, like today, where Japanese and American citizens are wandering around probably one of the most fierce battle sites of World War II, and yet today it’s a peaceful, beautiful area,” said Lim.

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Navy Lt. Keith Satoris, liaison officer with the Commander Fleet Activities Okinawa. "Training like this is essential in making sure that when it really happens, we're prepared and able to react."

KE14 focused on integrating communications and efforts between partner organizations to facilitate fast, efficient responses to incidents that could potentially occur in the Pacific

region, according to U.S. Army Capt. Sean Sullivan, a liaison officer with the Army's 10th Regional Support Group.

This exercise provides a great opportunity for us to learn about how each different branch of U.S. service works and the specific role and responsibilities of the different services, according to a representative from the JGSDF's 15th Brigade Headquarters, defense section.

Exercises like this, which emphasize maximizing response capabilities and effective use of assets, are vital in determining the ability to address these situations should they happen in the real-world.

"Exercises like this help us link all of our resources for if, or when, something like one of these situations should ever happen," said Sullivan. "It lets us find out the best ways to communi-

cate and work together prior to the time of the event, so we instantly know who can do what and ensure faster reaction time."

The result of this exercise ensured the ability of U.S. forces to effectively and mutually respond to a regional crisis that would have a direct impact on the Pacific region, according to U.S. Marine Corps Col. Dwight Neeley, the night senior watch officer

for the exercise.

"Exercise Keen Edge provides an outstanding opportunity for U.S. military forces and specifically the Marines here in Japan, to work closely with our JGSDF counterparts to enhance our combat readiness and interoperability," said Neeley. "This allows us to work through the challenges of bilateral interoperability in order to ultimately provide a stronger defense capability to our allies in the region."

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this year New Zealand and the U.S. Marine Corps.

The DPD is a battery-powered vehicle capable of carrying two divers and their equipment while submerged out of sight.

"The (DPD) gives the combat divers an amazing benefit over the normal combat diving operational limitations they have," said Petty Officer 1st Class Donald R. Miner, a medical deep-sea diver and instructor for the course with Headquarters Company, 3rd Recon. Bn., 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force. "It can defeat high currents and high tides using its battery. It also gives the divers more relaxation time as they're not swimming for extended periods. They can go without expending all their energy trying to get to shore."

The device increases the capabilities of the divers to get in areas they could not possibly get into successfully, such as fast-flowing rivers or other tributaries that come from land-based areas, according to Miner.

"The instructors for the course used a crawl-walk-run mentality when teaching us how to use (the

DPD) and how to be able to operate them efficiently and effectively," said Cpl. Nate Hitchcock, a reconnaissance man with Company B, 3rd Recon. Bn. "With their instructions, it really helped us out not only with using the DPDs but as a dive team in general. We were able to hone-in a lot of the skills that we needed."

The team is most vulnerable while performing insertions and extractions during missions, according to Hitchcock. The quicker the team can complete both of these, the safer and better off they are and the DPD helps them do just that.

"I was a little skeptical coming into this, and I think my team was as well because we were not familiar with (the DPDs)," said Hitchcock. "Once we got out and used them and just practiced, we didn't have any issues with them that more practice couldn't solve."

The overarching purpose of Exercise Sandfisher is to maintain a high level of interoperability, enhance military-to-military relations with partner nations, such as Japan and the Republic of Korea, and to enhance combat readiness through combined training.



Cpl. Peter E. Kober, left, and Sgt. Scott A. Hulsizer carry their diver propulsion device into the water to begin their dive Jan. 22, during a certification course at Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. The DPD is a battery-powered vehicle capable of carrying two divers and their equipment while submerged out of sight. The course was a part of Exercise Sandfisher 2014. Kober and Hulsizer are reconnaissance men with Company B, 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force. Photo by Cpl. Brandon Suhr

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this to the JGSDF, according to Cruz. The training will now take place annually, and it will be briefed to the commandant of the Marine Corps, who has expressed his interest.

"We have two academic days planned, and we also have two administrative days," said Staff Sgt. Andy Hurt, the faculty development coordinator with SNCOA Okinawa. "We present a curriculum here that's based off contemporary leadership topics that we put together with (the JGSDF's) input and feedback from other evolutions like this."

The topics ranged from the Marine Corps' enlisted education to value-based leadership and even combat fitness. The instructors informed the sergeants major on how the Marine Corps approached various leadership matters, and in turn asked how they would approach each of those situations using slides, demonstrations, group activities and discussions.

"We were able to see the difference in how the Japanese and Marines handle certain issues, as well as some of the ideologies that the Marines have," said Suzuki. "It was great to see how much enthusiasm and confidence our instructors had in teaching us."

The program was not just an opportunity for the JGSDF to develop, but for the Marine Corps to develop as well, according to Cruz.

"I look at it as an opportunity to continue to build



Top enlisted soldiers with the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force and U.S. Marines swing kettle bells during a combat fitness course as part of the Japan Observer Exchange Program Jan. 23 on Camp Hansen. The JOEP is part of a larger effort to strengthen and enhance joint efforts between the U.S. and Japan. The JGSDF soldiers are with various units throughout the JGSDF, and the Marines are with the Staff Noncommissioned Officer Academy, Okinawa. Photo by Cpl. Lena Wakayama

and nourish our relationship with the Japanese," said Cruz.

Hurt and the other instructors emphasized that while conducting this course, it was important for them to maintain humility while sharing this leadership package with the JOEP participants.

"We're not here to impose our will onto another service; it's quite the contrary," said Hurt,

expressing how fortunate he and the other instructors felt, working with the JGSDF sergeants major. "That's the best part of working with a foreign military – coming together and sharing points of view and strengthening what makes each service unique."

Go to www.youtube.com/3MEFcpao for video coverage of the event.

ARTP 13-4 begins with bang

Sgt. Brian A. Marion

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

They traveled the frozen land, looking for suitable places to set their howitzers. Each time, a group of them went ahead and scouted the areas.

Once the rest of the unit arrived, the Marines with 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, performed reconnaissance, security, occupy, position procedures before firing their M777A2 150 mm lightweight howitzers Jan. 20–22 to officially start Artillery Relocation Training Program 13-4 in the North Fuji Maneuver Area.

ARTP is a training exercise designed to enhance the readiness and proficiency of the regiment through live-fire training on various ranges.

The regiment is with 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

“On a difficulty scale of 1 to 10, this was by far a 10,” said Lance Cpl. Derrick T. Pfaff, an artilleryman with the unit. “It took us about 20 minutes to dig a hole less than a foot deep because of the frozen ground.”

Each time the regiment’s batteries travel to a new area, they send out an advanced party to conduct RSOP. This advanced party consists of a survey team, a security team and two-man teams from each howitzer within the battery.

The RSOP process begins when the advanced party reaches its destination. Once there, the Marines secure the area.

“As soon as we get there, we have already (completed) the reconnaissance part, and have (begun) the security

part,” said Staff Sgt. Craig F. Provins, a platoon sergeant with Battery A, 1st Bn., 12th Marines, currently assigned to 3rd Bn., 12th Marines, under the unit deployment program.

Once the Marines secure the area, the two-man teams occupy the areas where the guns will be and place markers indicating the general direction the howitzers should be facing. Then, as the rest of the battery arrives, the teams position the howitzers, so that they can be emplaced.

“It’s all part of the job,” said Provins. “Without the Marines doing their job in the advanced party, we wouldn’t be able to fire the guns.”

Once the Marines emplaced the howitzers, they prepared them for firing and waited for fire missions from the fire direction center.

Waiting for missions so the Marines can fire is one the most time consuming parts of this training, according to Sgt. Shamar M. Jackson, an artilleryman with the unit. Some days several hours can pass before a single fire mission and other days it seems like the fire missions come nonstop.

On the final day, the Marines received a fire mission to expend all remaining ammunition, allowing the Marines on the gun line one last volley to the target area before heading home.

“It’s what we do,” said Cpl. Kenneth M. Whittkop, an artilleryman with 1st Bn., 12th Marines. “If we could just shoot the howitzers every day, I would be extremely happy.”

Marines wait for a fire mission Jan. 20 during Artillery Relocation Training Program 13-4 at the North Fuji Maneuver Area. ARTP is a training exercise designed to enhance the readiness and proficiency of the artillery regiment through live-fire training on various ranges. The Marines are with 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, currently assigned to 3rd Bn., 12th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, under the unit deployment program.





Lance Cpl. Cameron L. Belk begins guiding a 7-ton truck during reconnaissance, security, occupy and position procedures Jan. 17 at the North Fuji Maneuver area. Belk and other Marines with 3rd Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, used RSOP prior to shooting an M777A2 150 mm lightweight howitzer during Artillery Relocation Training Program 13-4. Belk is an artilleryman with 1st Bn., 12th Marines, currently assigned to 3rd Bn., 12th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, under the unit deployment program.



Lance Cpl. Derrick T. Pfaff prepares a round for firing Jan. 20 during Artillery Relocation Training Program 13-4 at the North Fuji Maneuver area. ARTP is a training exercise designed to enhance the readiness and proficiency of the regiment through live-fire training on various ranges. Pfaff is an artilleryman with 1st Battalion, 12th Marine Regiment, currently assigned to 3rd Bn., 12th Marines, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force, under the unit deployment program.



Residents, service members and their families make the 400-stair climb surrounded by cherry trees to a prayer site during Nago's 52nd annual Cherry Blossom Festival Jan. 25 at the Nago Castle Ruin Site Park, Okinawa. "It was quite the climb," said Lance Cpl. Jesse J. Edwards, a multichannel equipment specialist with 7th Communication Battalion, III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, III MEF. "It was surprisingly tough. It feels like I did a full leg (workout)." The festival had multiple vendors and varied performances throughout the weekend.

Nago celebrates 52nd annual Cherry Blossom Festival

Story and Photos by
Cpl. Natalie M. Rostran
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

As the cool Okinawa winter air gradually warms to prepare for spring, residents know that cherry blossom season is near.

The city of Nago celebrated its 52nd annual Cherry Blossom Festival Jan. 25-26 at the Nago Castle Ruin Site Park, Okinawa.

As one of the southern-most islands of Japan, Okinawa boasts the earliest blooms of the "sakura" usually in January.

The festival not only featured the first blooms of the season, but also hundreds of vendors and various stage and musical performances for all ages. For service members and their families living on Okinawa, the event is another unique experience available to them.



The Okita Elementary School Marching Band performs during the opening ceremony parade for Nago's 52nd annual Cherry Blossom Festival Jan. 25. Cherry blossom festivals happen nationwide to celebrate the return of the blossoms every year. The city of Nago hosts one of the first cherry blossom festivals in Japan, giving the festival its slogan, "Japan's spring starts here."

"How often are you going to be in Japan? You have to take advantage of the time," said Kristy J. McFarland, a Marine spouse. Like McFarland and her fam-

ily, many of the festivalgoers attempted the almost 400-stair climb to the prayer site. The climb was a test even for the Marines who attended.

"It was quite the climb," said Lance Cpl. Jesse J. Edwards, a multichannel equipment specialist with 7th Communication Battalion, III Marine Expeditionary Force Headquarters Group, III MEF. "It was surprisingly tough. It feels like I did a full leg (workout)."

The food was another definite draw for many of the Marines who attended the festival, according to Lance Cpl. Gregorio Montes, a distribution management specialist with the Distribution Management Office, Headquarters and Service Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Marine Corps Installations Pacific. It was exciting to find new favorite foods

and try different things that they have not ever seen before.

"I'm lucky that I came around the time of year to experience this," said Montes. "The food is great. I've tried so many new things."

The real stars of the festival were the cherry blossoms, which while not in full bloom were still a lovely and unique sight for many service members.

"It was really beautiful," said Montes. "I've seen stuff before online, but nothing compares to the real deal."

Between the food, the blossoms and the fun, Edwards encourages everyone to make it to the next cherry blossom festival.

"It's actually really nice," said Edwards. "I think everyone should come out here. The local food is great, the flowers are beautiful and lovely. It's quite the experience."



Masked wrestlers of Ryukyu Dragon Pro Wrestling duel it out during Nago's 52nd annual Cherry Blossom Festival Jan. 25. There were multiple vendors serving food, as well as performances by various artists, including dancers, masked wrestlers and fire breathers. The city of Nago hosts one of the first cherry blossom festivals in Japan, giving the festival its slogan, "Japan's spring starts here."

Combat Assault Battalion explodes through training

Lance Cpl. Stephen D. Himes

OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

As the force of the explosion sends a shockwave through the air, the pressure can be felt against the chests of everyone nearby.

The sound echoes through the area as Marines rush to clear the barbed-wire obstruction recently ravaged by the explosion. A bulldozer rumbles through the opening, churning up earth, clearing simulated mines from the path.

Marines from Combat Assault Battalion performed breaching operations against deliberate defensive positions Jan. 22–23 at Landing Zone Dodo in the Central Training Area.

“Over the past decade, we haven’t had to use these core skills,” said Capt. Timothy G. Ernst, commanding officer of Combat Engineer Company, Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force. “This training event is designed to hone and sharpen our capabilities outlined in the deliberate defense and breaching operations doctrine.”

The exercise was so expansive that it required every element of CAB, including Light Armored Reconnaissance Co., Assault Amphibious Vehicle Co. and Combat Engineer Co. to be successful in the multitiered two-day event.

“Our heavy-equipment Marines arrived at (LZ Dodo) about a week ago to break ground and start the development of this obstacle belt,” said Sgt. Cameron Collier, a combat engineer with Combat Engineer Co. “They were given an open-ended task of creating something that will be versatile as well as challenging.”

This was no ordinary training event for CAB, as the battalion went through a long, arduous process to actually build the training



A Marine provides cover for two combat engineers as they prepare a simulated bangalore torpedo for use Jan. 21 at Landing Zone Dodo in the Central Training Area. The Marines are participating in an expansive obstacle belt designed to test the abilities of Combat Assault Battalion. The Marines are with Combat Engineer Company, Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

site, conduct the training under restrictions, and prove expansive training is an option while stationed in Okinawa.

“All too often the term ‘we can’t do that’ is used in reference to training in Okinawa,” said Maj. Daniel J. Thomas, operations officer in charge for CAB. “While our focus was on the training, we also showed the Corps what we can do, not what we can’t.”

The Marines who built the course really went beyond expectations, according to 1st Lt. Matthew R. Audette, a platoon commander

with Combat Engineer Co. The tank ditch was dug deeper than anticipated and the tank berm was higher than projected.

The experience gained during this training gave the battalion a chance to fine-tune its procedures in preparation for the day it’s needed on the battlefield.

“We are a significant factor to the mobility and countermobility of the 3rd Marine Division,” said Thomas. “Our expertise and efficiency performing these types of tasks are crucial to mission accomplishment.”

A line of assault amphibious vehicles passes through a cleared mine field Jan. 21 at LZ Dodo in the Central Training Area. All of Combat Assault Battalion participated in a multiday training event to exercise their unique skills. The Marines and vehicles are with Combat Assault Battalion, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

The crew of an assault amphibious vehicle peers out of its hatches awaiting clearance to traverse a demolished tank berm Jan. 21 at LZ Dodo in the Central Training Area. “Over the past decade, we haven’t had to use these core skills,” said Capt. Timothy G. Ernst. “This training event is designed to hone and sharpen our capabilities outlined in the deliberate defense and breaching operations doctrine.” Ernst is the commanding officer of Combat Engineer Co., Combat Assault Bn., 3rd Marine Division, III MEF. The AAV is with Assault Amphibious Vehicle Co., CAB.





Capt. Gable F. Hackman executes a counter to the round kick on Chief Warrant Officer Nickolas J. Philbrook as part of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program exercise during the battalion super-squad competition Jan. 23 on Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. The super-squad competition physically challenged the Marines and sailors and brought them together as a unit. The event consisted of various challenges such as a 2.5-mile hike, completion of an obstacle course and Intermediate Combat Rifle Marksmanship live-fire. Hackman is a legal service specialist, and Philbrook is a trial services administrative officer. Both represented H&S Battalion's Legal Services section.

Super-squad competition showcases esprit de corps

Story and photos by
Lance Cpl. Diamond N. Peden

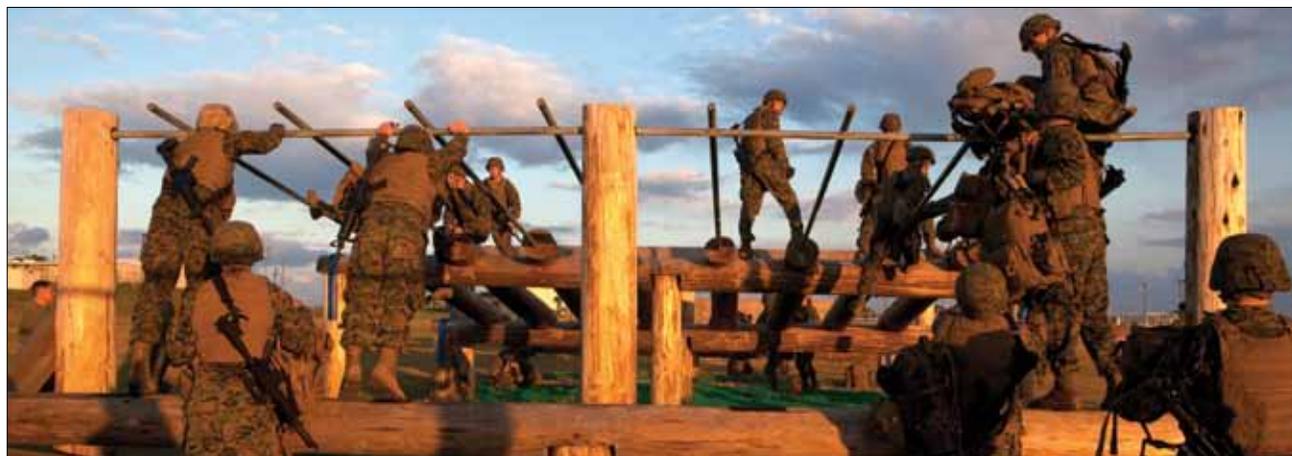
OKINAWA MARINE STAFF

Esprit de corps, or group spirit, is a common motivational phrase within the Marine Corps. It is often stressed in the workplace by Marines to emphasize the value of unit cohesion and combat readiness.

In an effort to feed that motivational flame, Marines and sailors of Headquarters and Service Battalion, Marine Corps Base Camp Smedley D. Butler, Marine Corps Installation Pacific, came together for a battalion super-squad competition Jan. 23 starting on Marine Corps Air Station Futenma and ending at Camp Hansen.

The super-squad competition was fashioned to physically challenge the Marines and sailors and bring them together as a unit.

"The goal is to build camaraderie," said Capt. Elice Parker Jr., operations officer, S-3, operations and training, H&S Bn. "The Marines get a fun day off from their



Squads race against time to get across the obstacle course for the title of super-squad Jan. 23 on Marine Corps Air Station Futenma during a battalion super-squad competition. The Marines and sailors are with H&S Bn., MCB Camp Butler.

everyday duties to get out here and get some. I think it accomplished all of those things. I had a lot of fun and from the looks on all of the Marines and sailors faces, I think they had fun too."

The events of the day consisted of two portions. At MCAS Futenma, the morning consisted of a 2.5-mile hike to the obstacle course, completion of the obstacle course, a squad exercise, Marine

Corps Martial Arts Program exercise and a memory exercise event.

In the afternoon, the groups went to Camp Hansen where they completed another two-mile hike, an Intermediate Combat Rifle Marksmanship live-fire, a memory exercise, and assembled a radio to transmit a medical evacuation request.

"Through all the hardship, they seem to have come together," said Gunnery Sgt. Larry J. Arnold II, operations chief, S-3, operations and training, H&S Bn. "If one Marine fell behind, another Marine would take his rifle or his pack, so that they could help that Marine out and work together as a team. The whole team would rally behind him and try to motivate him to get him up back with the squad again. They just never quit."

At day's end, after all the struggling, the Marines and sailors reminisced over the challenges they had to overcome together.

"During the obstacle course, we all had to help each other get over the bars," said Lance Cpl. Andrew J. Harp, a supply administration

and operations specialist with the battalion. "We couldn't do something until we all got through it. The first time, (we) were individuals just trying to (motivate) each other, saying, 'Hey, you got this!'"

"The second time, after doing the MCMAP moves in between the two obstacle courses, there was a lot more teamwork because there were people (physically helping) each other over the bar."

Third squad, comprised of legal service specialists, won the Super-Squad of the Year award for H&S Bn. and set the bar high for the next competition.

"I think we met the commander's intent to the utmost of our ability, with very positive results, and very positive feedback from Marines and the Seabees," said Arnold. "They're already talking about the next super-squad competition, so it was definitely a success. There are definitely some things that we could work on to make the next event better. That's (in) everything we do. You live and learn from your mistakes and make it better the next time."



A squad receives instruction on assembling the PRC-117 radio during the battalion super-squad competition Jan. 23 at Range 15 on Camp Hansen. Camp Hansen's afternoon events consisted of a two-mile hike, an Intermediate Combat Rifle Marksmanship live-fire, a memory exercise, and assembly of a radio to transmit a medical evacuation request. The Marines are legal service specialists representing H&S Bn., Legal Services section.

In Theaters Now

JAN. 31 - FEB. 6

FOSTER

TODAY 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 6 p.m.; 47 Ronin (PG13), 9:30 p.m.
SATURDAY The Nut Job (PG), noon; The Nut Job (3-D)(PG), 3 p.m.; Ride Along (PG13), 6 p.m.; Devil's Due (R), 9 p.m.
SUNDAY The Nut Job (PG), 1 p.m.; Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (PG13), 4 p.m.; 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 7 p.m.
MONDAY Ride Along (PG13), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY Devil's Due (R), 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (PG13), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY The Nut Job (3-D) (PG), 7 p.m.

KADENA

TODAY The Nut Job (3-D) (PG), noon; Frozen (3-D) (PG), 2:15 p.m.; Ride Along (PG13), 4:45 p.m.; Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (PG13), 9:30 p.m.; Lone Survivor (R), 10:15 p.m.
SATURDAY Frozen (3-D) (PG), 11 a.m.; Ride Along (PG13), 1:30 p.m.; 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 4 p.m.; Lone Survivor (R), 6:45 p.m.; Ride Along (PG13), 9:30 p.m.
SUNDAY The Nut Job (3-D) (PG), 11 a.m.; Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (PG13), 1:15 p.m.; The Nut Job (3-D) (PG), 4 p.m.; Ride Along (PG13), 6:15 p.m.; Lone Survivor (R), 9 p.m.
MONDAY The Nut Job (PG), 4:30 p.m.; 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 7:30 p.m.
TUESDAY Ride Along (PG13), 4:30 p.m.; Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (PG13), 7:30 p.m.
WEDNESDAY The Nut Job (3-D) (PG), 4:30 p.m.; Devil's Due (R), 7:30 p.m.
THURSDAY The Nut Job (3-D) (PG), 4:30 p.m.; 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 7:30 p.m.

COURTNEY

TODAY Frozen (G), 6 p.m.; The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (PG13), 9 p.m.
SATURDAY Frozen (G), 3 p.m.; The Hunger Games: Catching Fire (PG13), 6 p.m.
SUNDAY Frozen (G), 3 p.m.; Devil's Due (R), 6 p.m.
MONDAY The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug (PG13), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY Closed
WEDNESDAY Ride Along (PG13), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY Closed

FUTENMA

TODAY 47 Ronin (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
SATURDAY Devil's Due (R), 4 p.m.; 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 7 p.m.
SUNDAY Lone Survivor (R), 4 p.m.; Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (PG13), 7 p.m.
MONDAY Ride Along (R), 6:30 p.m.
TUESDAY-THURSDAY Closed

KINSER

TODAY Ride Along (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
SATURDAY 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 3 p.m.; Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
SUNDAY The Nut Job (PG), 1 p.m.; The Nut Job (3-D) (PG), 3:30 p.m.; Ride Along (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
MONDAY-TUESDAY Closed
WEDNESDAY Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (PG13), 6:30 p.m.
THURSDAY 47 Ronin (PG13), 6:30 p.m.

SCHWAB

TODAY 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 6 p.m.; 47 Ronin (PG13), 9:30 p.m.
SATURDAY 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 6 p.m.; Ride Along (PG13), 9:30 p.m.
SUNDAY 47 Ronin (PG13), 4 p.m.; The Legend of Hercules (PG13), 7:30 p.m.
MONDAY American Hustle (R), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues (PG13), 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY-THURSDAY Closed

HANSEN

TODAY 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 6:30 p.m.; 47 Ronin (PG13), 10 p.m.
SATURDAY 47 Ronin (3-D) (PG13), 6 p.m.; Ride Along (PG13), 9:30 p.m.
SUNDAY Anchorman 2 (PG13), 2:30 p.m.; 47 Ronin (PG13), 6 p.m.
MONDAY Ride Along (PG13), 7 p.m.
TUESDAY The Secret Life of Walter Mitty (PG), 7 p.m.
WEDNESDAY The Wolf of Wall Street (R), 7 p.m.
THURSDAY Jack Ryan: Shadow Recruit (PG13), 7 p.m.

THEATER DIRECTORY

CAMP FOSTER 645-3465
KADENA AIR BASE 634-1869
(USO NIGHT) 632-8781
MCAS FUTENMA 636-3890
(USO NIGHT) 636-2113
CAMP COURTNEY 622-9616
CAMP HANSEN 623-4564
(USO NIGHT) 623-5011
CAMP KINSER 637-2177
CAMP SCHWAB 625-2333
(USO NIGHT) 625-3834

Movie schedule is subject to change without notice. Call in advance to confirm show times. For a complete listing and 3-D availability visit www.shopmyexchange.com.



SINGLE MARINE PROGRAM EVENTS

For more information or to sign up, contact the Single Marine Program at 645-3681.

SUPER BOWL PARTY

• SMP is hosting a party Feb. 3 at the SMP office on Camp Foster for the upcoming Super Bowl. There will be free food and refreshments at the event. For more information, call the SMP office at the number above.

FOREST ADVENTURE PARK TRIP

• SMP is hosting a trip to Forest Adventure Park Feb. 9. There will be a bus fee of \$10 paid at the SMP office prior to the trip and a 3,000 yen admission fee at the park. Sign up with the SMP office by Feb. 6. For more information, call the SMP office at the number above.

Mention of any company in this notice does not imply endorsement by the Marine Corps.

TEST YOUR CORPS KNOWLEDGE:

Who was the oldest Marine recruit to graduate boot camp?

See answer in next week's issue

LAST WEEK'S QUESTION:

Which core value encompasses the mental, moral and physical strength ingrained in Marines?

ANSWER:

Courage.



Japanese phrase of the week:

“Kinyobi desu.”

(pronounced: kin-yoh-bee-des)

It means “It is Friday.”

CHAPLAINS'

ORNER

Time to make a change



Lt. Jon Black
CAMP HANSEN CHAPLAIN

Have you ever been to Timbuktu? Did you even know that such a place really exists? It does! I actually saw the road sign. It is in Morocco in case you were wondering. Well, even if you weren't wondering, it would still be in Morocco. If you left Cape Hatteras and sailed toward sunny Rota, Spain, and were off by just two degrees, guess where you would end up? That is right, Morocco. Maybe even in Timbuktu, literally. Now I do not know about you, maybe Timbuktu is not such a bad place, but I have been to sunny Spain and I will take the seashore over sand dunes every time.

Remember all the big changes you were going to make at the beginning of the New Year? Sometimes all we really need to do is just make a two-degree change. Two degrees is not much. But over time and distance, it can either put you in an idyllic seaside

town in Spain, or in ... Timbuktu.

One of my favorite quotes by Adlai Stevenson II goes like this:

“Upon the plains of hesitation, bleached the bones of countless millions, who, when on the threshold of victory sat down to wait, and in waiting, died.”

Go ahead. Reread that; how big is a “threshold?” One step? Maybe two? Millions died before they had victory, all because they waited. They did not have to change their course 180 degrees, only two degrees. Often we fail to make changes in our lives because we are fixated on the “big” issues. So, we sit down and wait. We content ourselves with sucking sand in Timbuktu when we could be enjoying Spain.

What two-degree change do you need to make? Now is not the time to “sit down and wait.” Now is the time for a two-degree change. We are on an island in the Pacific, we have plenty of time and plenty of distance. Just two degrees. Time and distance are on your side. Happy Travels.

FOR UPCOMING SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICES AND EVENTS FOR ALL MARINE CORPS BASE CHAPELS, CALL 645-2501 OR VISIT WWW.MCIPAC.MARINES.MIL AND LOOK UNDER “AROUND MCIPAC”